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## Water and Spirit

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## Water and Spirit

With the pouring of water at a baptism, the Spirit brings about an effect in a human that has more significant consequences than when the recipient was born. A mere physical interaction with such spiritual effects seems extremely disproportionate. Water and Spirit can apparently exist in a combination that is far more beneficial for us than any mixing together of water and oil. We can touch and affect the spiritual by means of the material: very important for us who are both physical and spiritual.

For example, taking deep breaths and doing some stretching exercises do not cause prayer or bring us into direct contact with God, but such a practice allows for and supports spiritual experiences. If we cannot directly and easily enter into a peaceful, meditative mode, we can ordinarily make use of physical actions to help us in reaching a state of mind we could not otherwise achieve. Without some effort on our part, communication with God or anyone else would not be possible. But if we take simple initial steps that are within our power, such as taking up a book or an article, attending a meeting or going to a church, we are far more likely to have experiences that nourish our minds and hearts than if we only wait for initiatives to come from outside us.

From another perspective, even the ordinary physical or material means that we use on order to help us consciously engage our spirituality often begin from inspirations. Whenever a thought occurs to talk to someone we know about matters of the heart, we are most likely the beneficiaries of small but loving invitations. When we accept them, more can happen. We take a step, and momentum builds. Only thinking about making a call to someone who might appreciate hearing from us, or wishing to become more active in volunteer service, is not enough. But if we only take some small but real action in the desired direction, we might be pleasantly surprised by where we end. We do what seems right in the moment, and then become aware of some attendant positive consequences that, had we known we could experience them, we would have chosen them. The source of all inspiration is interested not only in our own welfare, but in that of the entire world about us that we influence through our basic attitudes of hopefulness, trust and care as much as by our words and deeds.

Just as our physical efforts can have effects upon our spirits, our spirits have effects upon our physical being. For example, praying does not usually make all pain, difficulties or challenges disappear. But when our interaction with God is more about honestly acknowledging our present interior state than on stating what should be done according to our viewpoint, we find ourselves more at peace with the realities we cannot change, and also peacefully

aware of next steps that we can take. When we decide, at the beginning of a day, that our attitude is, for example, to expect and trust inspirations, we are quite likely to recognize and act according to more of such experiences than if we start out our day only with thoughts of what we expect to be doing.

Water and Spirit: a graced combination for our lives.